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A. P. Moore

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Epilobium

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Introduction

Non ex virore, sed videri, videri, plant.

It was my intention to have written on a species of *Eupatorium* medicinal qualities of which have lately been discovered in South America to possess extraordinary virtue, in the cure of the bite of the Rattlesnake: but being disappointed in getting sufficient & satisfactory information relative to this plant, I am obliged at a late hour of this year to make choice of an other subject, & have now to beg your indulgence while I offer a few hasty remarks on Epilepsy.

Having had an opportunity of seeing this disease & its treatment, make it the subject of the present dissertation, but notwithstanding some degree of diffidence, as I am aware of its ^{very} obscure & difficult understand, & when once completely formed that it has baffled the skill of some of the ablest physicians; & by many it has been thought incurable. I am inclined however to believe that this disease may be cured even in its most inveterate forms.

I trust it will not be considered arrogant at my early coming forward to attack this bold disease when I shall have stated some facts that confirm me in this opinion.

On this subject it will not be expected that I could have many original ideas as it has been ably treated ^{by} Sympson, Haller, Rush, & Barton; & in preparing this dissertation I avail myself of the information which I have acquired from these gentlemen, & also from my own observation, which although limited I hope will not be without interest.

In subordinating this Essay to the examination of the Faculty,
I would feel much anxiety for its fate, were I not sensible that
their candour, & liberality, are equal to their learning.

An Essay on Epilepsy.

(This) disease is placed by Doct. Haller in the class of Neuroses, & third
order of Epilepsia.

It is defined, as consisting in convulsions of the greater part
of the muscles of voluntary motion, attended with a loss of sense, &
ending in a state of insensibility & sleeping sleep.

It has frequently been observed that the general character and
form of the disease appears the same in all the different persons
whom it affects. It comes on with convulsions ^{& symptoms attending} ~~of the greater part~~
usually in good health. After continuing for some time it goes off
leaving the patient in his usual health. These fits are sometimes
preceded by premonitory signs, such as a general restlessness, tremorings,
vertigo, bitter taste in the mouth, odour of breath, redness of
the face, noise in the ears, palpitation, constipation of the bowels to-
gether with flatulency of the stomach, & intestines, & pain in some
of the extremities, pimples on the tongue, sleeping off, & all the horrors
of death anticipated by the unfortunate person.

These signs usually frequently appear two or three days before
the fit, particularly in the first fits, & afterwards come on ^{insensibly} without
any previous warning.

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Before the fit comes on in other persons there is a sensation
called the *Aura epileptica*. The patient describes it as if
drops of cold water, or vapour was moving in some part
of the limbs, or body, most frequently beginning in the toes &
upon from there ^{ascending} ~~moving~~ up to the head, & when
nowhere there the person immediately falls down in an
epileptic fit. But these signs do not commonly appear
before the attack, nor are they as frequent preludes
those mentioned above. It is said by experienced
writers, that the less common warnings of the approach
the falling sickness, as it is called by the common
people, are pains in the bowels, numbness of the extremities,
dimness of sight, heaviness of the face, shortness of breath,
nausea, vomiting & purging, pain in the back & disposition
to faint, & sometimes the fit will rise no higher than this,
the patient will escape ~~from~~ for a time the attack; but
frequently the person falls in violent convulsions, the
limbs are violently agitated; sometime one side is more
affected than the other, the countenance much distorted, the
eyes inverted, fingers clenched, there is foaming at the mouth,
sometimes mixed with blood, when the tongue has been
seen. He loses all sense of feeling, & sometimes involun-
tarily ^{try}

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charges of urine, & feces. These convulsions last only a short time when ^{an} intermission takes place; but the fits are frequently renewed with great violence, & the length of time they last varies in different persons. After the convulsions have ceased, the patient generally falls into a stupid, insensible state, as if in a sound sleep; for 1, 2, or even 6 hours; he then gradually recovers his senses, but has no recollection of anything that took place in the paroxysm. During the fit the pulse & respiration are quick, & irregular, but after the convulsions, they return to their healthy state.

These are the general symptoms of the disease, but they vary in violence, & duration, in different persons, & at different times in the same person.

There is great variety in the returns of this disease. Many persons have several slight ~~light~~ fits in a day - sometimes they occur seldom once a day, or once a week - sometimes once a month, or two, or three times a year. The interval has been known to last 13 years, & then the attacks were renewed with greater violence.

The continuance of the fit is most commonly from a quarter of an hour to 2 hours, & in more extraordinary cases the patient is stupor for two, or three days, during which time frequent convulsions occur. After convulsions ^{some persons} scarcely know that they have had them, being so little fatigued, or injured, while others feel great dullness, & numbness for several hours, or a head ache subsists & continues 8

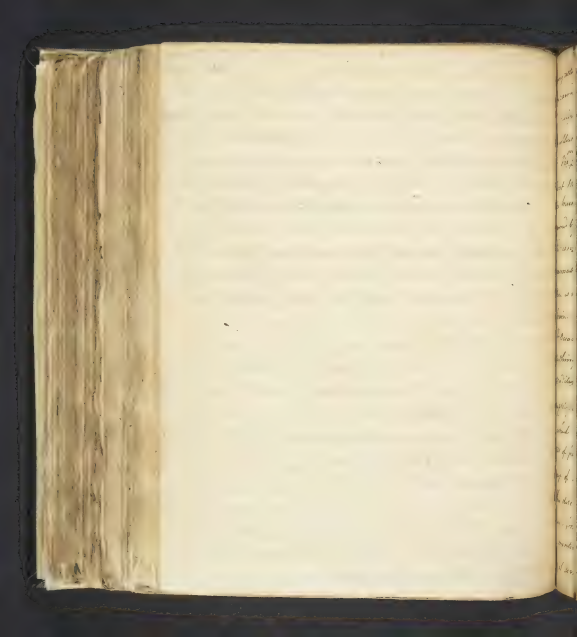
not recover their faculties entirely for several days. Persons of
any age are liable to it & Epilepsy but it is often more violent
among children than grown persons, & there is a much greater probability
of their getting rid of it. Boys are more subject to this disease
than girls. Its returns are periodical & generally come on during
the night, after the last nap, being some how influenced by sleep.

Convulsions are common with children from their birth
to the 3rd year & as this disease often ceases between the 2d & 3d
year it is very probably occasioned by worms, or some affection of the
stomach & intestines. In these cases there is always ^{very} a recovery.

Epilepsy has been observed to disappear about puberty when it
commenced at an early age: but more frequently if it passes
from the first or second years it proves a tedious complaint. Some persons
live to an old age in this disease & retain their faculties but little
impaired, while others feel its insurmountable ^{power} & realize its dreadful
effects in the ruin of their mental faculties, & in death its self.

Diagnosis. Epilepsy resembles Hygieia, & is distinguished from
the latter is attended with Globus Hygieia, & generally appears
in barren, & single women. It is easily distinguished from
Chorea by the latter most frequently having partial convulsions of
the legs, arm of one side, & the senses remaining ^{but} ~~impaired~~ ^{impaired}.
It is inclined to think this disease nearly allied to the jerks.

Epilepsy is distinguished from Tetanus by the latter



being attended with tonic seasons without the senses being much
impaired. & without being followed by sleep.

Inducere simulata may be easily distinguished from this disease
by asking a Vol. ablati. or by striking the patient with a pin.

The ^{occasional} Causes of Epilepsy may be arranged under two heads
first those that excite the brain, & secondly those that weaken
the brain. In the first when there is too great a quantity of blood
poured by the arteries to the brain, & not being readily returned by
the veins; the vessels are distended, the nerves affected & it is
reasonable to suppose convulsions would come on. 2dly when
there is not sufficient stimulus for the healthy action of the
brain, convulsions take place at other times syncope.

The Occasional causes are injuries of the head, pain, worms,
hitting, poisons, calculi, repelled eruptions, from costiveness
crudities in the stomach, from plethora - from debility, from
suppression of customary evacuations, sudden frights in childhood
which is a frequent cause of this disease - from onanism from
the use of paper - great emotion of mind frequent intoxication. Hemo-
rroye of various kinds. (At Vienna out of 14 Epileptic patients
the disease was produced in 8 from suppressed catamenia &
in 6 from torridas sympathy may produce it. Doctor Cullen
mentioned in his Lectures 6 persons who fell down in convulsions
at seeing a person in a fit & that 5 of a Portuguese family



This disease. Doctor Boerhaave relates in his lectures an instance
of a woman who fell down in a fit at seeing a church on fire.

Angilia Manicaria has been known to produce that disease.
Predisposing Causes. Epilepsy is sometimes hereditary. At other
times it depends on a mobility of the sensorium; which Doctor
Boerhaave says consists either in sensibility, or irritability, & depends
on one or the other. If an action excited, is by repetition made
more easily excited, & more vigorously performed; he considers this
an increase of irritability only; & is the reason why Epilepsy
& convulsions of all kinds, by being repeated are more easily
excited, readily become habitual, & are therefore more difficult
to cure. This mobility which is the predisposing cause, depends
more particularly upon debility, or upon a plethoric state of
the system. Debility produces ~~and~~ sensibility which appears more
frequently in women & children who are the most frequent
subjects of this disease.

Plethoric persons are frequent
subjects of this disease. Sleep disposes to this disease.

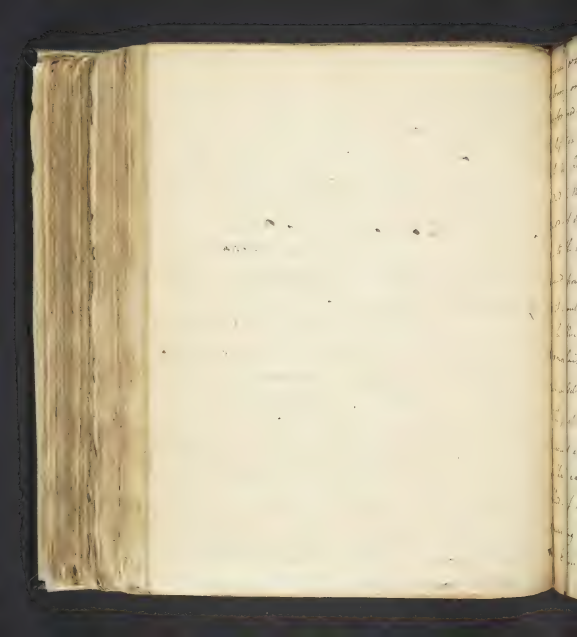
Exciting Cause. Epilepsy of all kinds, as intoxication, heat,
moral exercise, griefs, passions.

Appearances to be observed on dissection. dilation of some part
of the brain. Serum or sanguineous effusions - sometimes a long
time state of the brain without any effusion. Sometimes
tumors appear. Defecescencies, & at other times the brain is mortified.

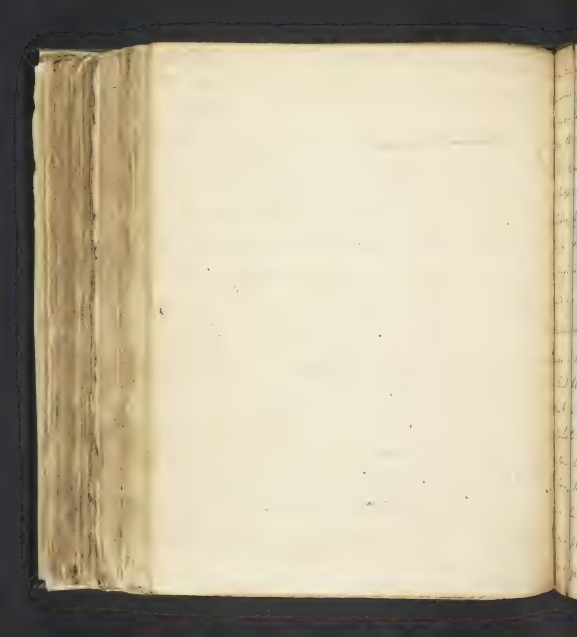


Ephely has been usually distinguished into *sympathia* & *idiopathia*. It is called *sympathia* when it is produced from affection of some other part of the body as from contusion, laceration, or wounds. Called *Idiopathia* when it is a primary disease & not dependant, or proceeding from any other.

In the cure of this disease I should be governed by the cause which occasioned it. When it is *sympathia*, arising from a wound, or blow on the head, I should make use of the remedies recommended by Doctor Sympke & Ossey, in such cases, as blood letting, cathartics, cold applications, & antiphlogistic regimen. If this disease is produced by worms, which are frequent cause among children, I would use such remedies as would dislodge, or destroy them, as mercurial purges, warm bath &c. Doctor Barton cured a case produced from this cause by Valerian, so I should use this medicine in combination with calomel. If the disease is caused by itching, we should scabify that part of the gums that appeared inflamed, then the bowels & bathe the feet in warm water. If fever comes on, I should treat it as a fever, give saline draughts, spirits of Nitre, & Antimonials. After the inflammatory symptoms subside & partial fever remains, I have found blister behind the neck of great



series & to the extremities to loosen the excitation in the head,
by regular action. After this, obtained the cure will
be performed. If the Disease is accompanied by the Dura-
pnea, we should endeavour to cut off the Arteries above
the brain by a Ligature, which is related to have suc-
ceeded in the hands of Professor Astor of Bologna. If this plan
should not succeed it is advised to cut out the heart thro' gross
incision to the Dura, or apply a Blister, & if the disease appears to
be caused from compressed, or wounded Lungs, which can be con-
firmed, it would be proper to divide it as recommended in Sydenham.
If the Disease proceeds from suppressed Evacuations such as
Hæmorrhoids, Leeches should be applied, as near the Sea mountain
as is possible, Electric pills, and warm fomentations
to the part are recommended. If from Catarrhus vesicæ, I
should employ the Remedies recommended by Dr. Chapman
in that case - if the system be too much excited I would
bleed - if there be much debility, I would have recourse to
strengthening Diet Cathartics Polygala Senega with some Bala-
ne, Elsin Purgative, & the warm Bath.



disease in the former state of Epilepsy & to prevent the Recurrence
 arising from Draining cold water in the face, Prunings, but which
 is a treatment is thrown on the Muscles. Then, sulphur led
 on the nose, fresh air, sinapisms, blisters to the feet & Rub
 to loosening the Patient's clothes and elevating his head, are
 proper and useful. Dr. Barton suggests a Paroxysm of
 Epilepsy by Blisters and sinapisms. It is a fact well substantiated
 that in some instances this Disease continues from Habit although
 the original cause have ceased to act as in a case I have now
 and by Blisters the convulsions continue & when their effects
 have worn over. In such cases I hold it of the first impor-
 tance to make a search of possible disconnection. The safest &
 best plan of doing this last, namely if we can foresee the
 attack, & know the time of its return, is to give an Ounce of
 sulphate of Zinc & sulphate of Copper, ¹⁰ ~~and~~ the symptoms
 before it approaches this dose & repeat it when they
 relapse the system, & prevent the Paroxysm, as in Intermittent
 fever. But if the symptoms continue to increase, & the Patient
 of a plethoric Habit, he should be bled. Cold affusions
 also of great service in putting off the Paroxysm - Evacuation.

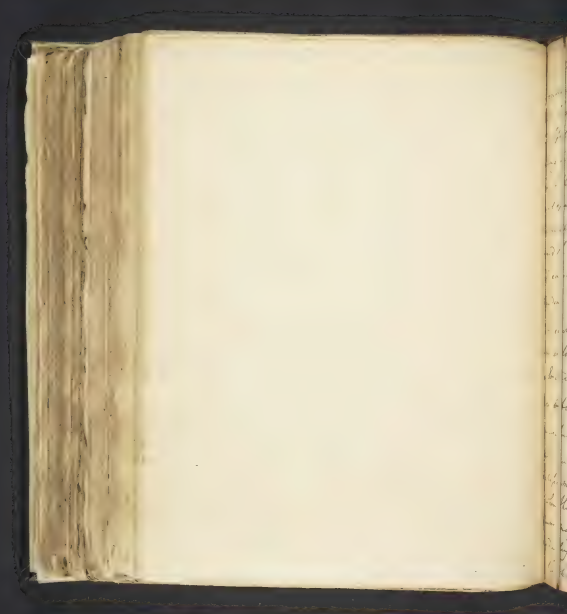


to be found here. It is seen capable of the full exertion of the
action and therefore should be applied to the feet to increase the
movement in the Extremities, and Muscles, which will assist in
removing the system. I expect very much in restoring the circulation
of the blood, a ang. talle, and with that I expect a
effort. Practice Cathartics are of great importance in the
case is generally attended with constipation. After the
Inflammatory symptoms are lessened we may give small
doses of Rectals of wine, and Digitalis gradually increasing
in watching their Effects. I have been recommended
combination with this Medicine to prevent Cathartics becoming
I would not give it when there is much Plethora & no
probability as it increases Constipation, & the action of the Bowels
is felt.

Bleeding is not a desirable unless there be a great tendency
to the head I would spare in that heat. Low diet, Exercise
Cathartics Emetics and Digitalis are more useful in lessening
It than I do it more gradually & permanently. I have found
it convenient in giving the Medicine without Opium &
Practice Cathartics were frequently exhibited it should be
continued till the desired effects are obtained. I have found the

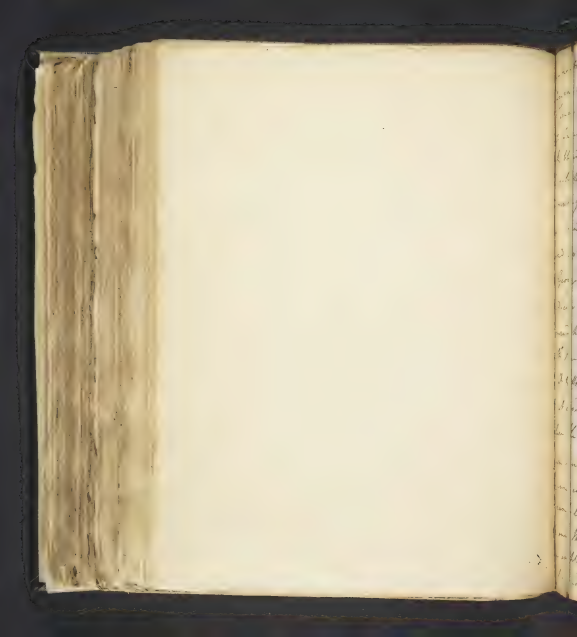


head to the back of the neck and on the left arm. Whenever
after land a fit we should give an Emetic throw cold water
the head and all the exciting causes. After the action
is completely reduced a Decoction of Rhus purpurea
is to be given as common Drink. By lowering the course and
action I believe a cure may be obtained tho' the Disease has
completely formed, & continued from Habit. I have seen
attended with success in cases to be mentioned in the sequel
Disease arising from the treatment recommended in Epilepsy
was marked Epilepsy in the system, and the disease conti-
nued from Habit. The emetics were given to get off the
poison, & the other Medicines, with a view of reducing natural
heat to a healthy standard, without this we cannot expect
cure. The Phlebotomy is given as a Course after reducing the
heat, at the same time the patient should be informed that
it is a celebrated Remedy which may induce him to have
bath in the Medicine. It is highly spoken of by Dr. Cullen
who has written on Epilepsy. It is one of services in deter-
mining turgescence to the surface, & to direct the action
from the Brain. Diet and Exercise assist in changing
the Constitution which is necessary to a cure. On the contrary

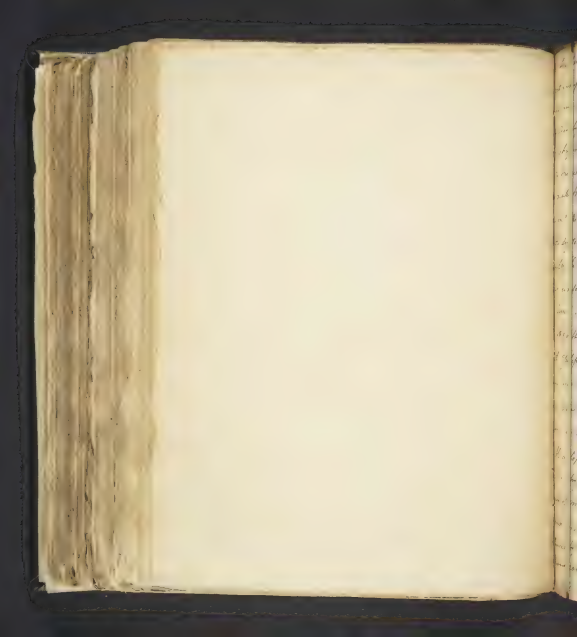


... even a remedy to some extent, which have been highly
 recommended such as Bleeding calomel antispasmodics
 the Tonic & cold Bath. The reason why these are not more
 useful is that they have been tried so indiscriminately without
 taking into Consideration the cause of the Disease, & the condition
 of the Patient.

In the Spasmodic Epilepsy of the Patient & of a plethoric condition
 we should treat the disease in the manner recommended above
 and the occasional cause & endeavour to cure the head so
 as to prevent the disease from arising from Excess & of long
 standing the cure becomes more difficult but we should not
 be discouraged from attempting it. The first intention of
 the cure is to endeavour to put off the Paroxysm by giving
 Opium about an Hour before it is expected, & also before
 the first Blister & applications to the Extremities
 as useful Auxiliaries - In the interstices we would recom-
 mend a nourishing Diet cold Bath & Tonic.
 Antispasmodics are useful when there is much Mobility
 when the Spirits are depressed Asafetida Camphor & such
 may be resorted to Dr Baillon mentions three cures
 and by him with Theriacum it was also successful
 in the hands of Dr Lister at Maryland. Dr Ross



It is combination with Opium Camphor & Castor.
Lunar and Cuprum ammoniacum, an valuable Remedy.
Lunar says he has made complete cures on persons with
the face with ʒi. ʒo of Argyle given in the Theriaca from Rome.
Robbards relates a cure by means of injections of starch &
reboiled of silver has been lately used with considerable
advantage in Epilepsy when this disease has been of many
years standing. Two cases of it were given in the first and
second volumes of the Physical Journal. Dr. White
of Georgia beginning with one sixth of a grain of this
medicine increased the dose to eight grains in one day
cured his Patient. I have been proposed to treat Epilepsy
with Mercury, which I have seen tried without effect.
Dr Hoffman cured one case by this plan; if used at
it would be proper to combine it with Valerian.
When the returns are periodical Blisters and leeches are
employed. The cold Bath very important so are
exercise, company, change of Climate & long Journey.
Simple life is said to have cured Pox. Blesting
over the Body is said to have completed cures, & have
been employed in the case of Botolphs. & others on the
face is known to effect a cure.



has been already observed that Cholera is frequently occasioned by
contaminated, condiments, & different affections of the stomach, & by worms,
green. In these cases is it not probable that the treatment recom-
mended by Dr. Hamilton at Edinburgh, supported by the experience of
Dr. Thompson, in cases of Cholera, Dysentery, or Tetanus, &c. of advantage
by the use of frequent & long continued purges, might not effect
inward the affections of the disease, & induce a change in the entire
system? As the above diseases are the consequence of greater mobility
of the system, & are cured by means of cathartics, which destroy that
mobility, the same treatment applied to a disease depending on the same
cause, would probably be equally successful.

June 1. Month 6. 1818 Charleston.

A youth of 17 years of age of a plethoric constitution was attacked
with Cholera. It was thought to have been brought on by blows received
some time before we knew when the fit was coming on by a
friend. His head with other prominent organs commenced
the attack. The throat felt loose in violent convulsions,
with a loss of sense & ending in sleep. This returned gradually
His physicians treated him by blood-letting together with
the use of emetics. After several ineffectual attempts
with an emetic, the patient was removed to the ~~hospital~~ ^{asylum},
attended by Doctor Barlow & myself. When I saw him just before
he died I observed his countenance swelled, his pulse
was a little at the same time he felt great lancor,



his appetite was bad, & he was occasionally attacked with spasms. At
the time there was no complaint of the blood that had been removed, as
medicines had been used, but still the convulsions continued. I con-
sidered the disease completely formed, & continued, by the power of nature,
also, the first indication of cure was to make nature determine the
issue. July 15. 1813 we began by giving an ounce of sulphate of zinc
sulphate of copper combined. It operated very well, & nauseated soon
afterwards, he was put on a milk & vegetable
diet, & received moderate exercise, & to avoid all occasional, & regulating
causes. To wear loose clothes, sleep with the head elevated, & when he had
symptoms of the fit to ^{take} emetics, & have a bucket of cold water bound
to his head. 2^d day no return of fit. Took a cathartic of glucose
sulf & gamboge, which operated frequently, & weakened him a little.
3^d day the fit relieved. 4th day no return of fit. He took sugar & honey
regulate his bowels - a ray made in July. The vigilance was great
thoroughly increased - a leech was applied in the back of the neck
5th day the fits were continued - pulse a little increased. 6th & 7th
days continued 9th July, no particular change. 10th day took strong
cathartic which operated frequently - pulse reduced. 11th day con-
tinued pills, & took for common drink, a decoction of viscous
Succowood. 12th & 13th continued pills &
weakened more. 14th but returned with symptoms of a fit
the cold affusions prevented. He followed the directions ^{strictly} very
This treatment was continued for nearly weeks

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that the 3rd week his spirits, & appetite began to return & he seemed
better. Morale exorcism & Company was advised. He
the use of medicine, & the taton was removed - also pills were
any other night for a week to obviate retention. By this
of treatment he was completely cured. I have lately heard
is in good health.

Case 2. 1811.

Thomas Gray, a boy of 16 was ~~attacked~~ ^{affected} with epilepsia
he had had from his childhood / by the same treatment
in case 1. &c. He has had no return of the disease.

Case 3.

Edmund an 40 year of age who had Diapathic Epilepsy
under the same treatment, & when I left home was much
improved, & had no return of the fits. However six weeks
only has elapsed which is not sufficient time to try the remedy.

I have now come to a close, and it only remains for me to return
my sincere thanks, to each of the Professors of this University, for the
politeness, & valuable information I have received. —

Phil^a
March 10th 1812

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